

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN JO 01159 132153Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00
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FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0475

UNCLAS SAN JOSE 1159

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, OTRA, CS
SUBJECT: PRESS REACTION TO TEXTILE TEAM VISIT

1. LOCAL COSTA RICAN PRESS, WHICH HAD NOT REPORTED ON MARCH 1-2 VISIT OF U.S. TEXTILE TEAM, HAS BEEN PRODDED INTO ACTION BY DINA DELLALE, SUGAR AND TEXTILE LOBBYIST FOR COSTA RICAN INDUSTRIES. MARCH 10 EDITION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE "TICO TIMES" CARRIED FRONT-PAGE REPORT THAT AT MARCH 8 LUNCHEON IN HONOR OF PRESIDENT-ELECT RODRIGO CARAZO HOSTED BY TEXTILE EXPORTERS, DELALLE INFORMED CARAZO THAT THE U.S. TEXTILE TEAM HAD ATTEMPTED TO "PULL SOMETHING OVER" ON COSTA RICA AND THE U.S. WAS "TRYING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT". DELALLE ALSO STATED THAT PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS NOT EXPLORATORY AND THAT TEXTILE TEAM WAS "REALLY TRYING TO GET COSTA RICA TO SIGN A TREATY WITH THE U.S." WHEN APPRISED OF THE VISIT DELALLE SAID SHE CALLED MIKE SMITH, THE CHIEF U.S. TEXTILE NEGOTIATOR, WHO WAS IN HONOLULU, AND "STARTED SCREAMING. WE SPENT THREE DAYS ARGUING BUT FINALLY THE U.S. EMBASSY HERE APOLOGIZED TO THE COSTA RICAN GOVERNMENT."

2. "TICO TIMES" ARTICLE ALSO CARRIED EMBOFF'S DENIAL THAT THERE WAS ANY ATTEMPT TO COERCE COSTA RICA INTO SIGNING A BILATERAL TREATY WITH THE U.S. ARTICLE
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QUOTED STATEMENT: "THESE REPORTS ARE NEWS TO US. OUR OBJECTIVE IN SENDING THE TEAM WAS TO CONSULT AND EXCHANGE INFORMATION WITH THE COSTA RICAN GOVERNMENT ON THE TEXTILE TRADE, PARTICULARLY BRASSIERES. OUR VIEW IS THAT THE TALKS WERE CONSTRUCTIVE AND CANDID. THE U.S. TEAM LEFT COSTA RICA VERY IMPRESSED WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY OFFICIALS WITH WHOM THEY DEALT,

AND IT NOW FEELS IT HAS A MUCH BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION."

3. "TICO TIMES" ALSO REPORTED THAT EMBASSY VERSION WAS CORROBORATED BY GONZALO RAMIREZ, WHO LED COSTA RICAN DELEGATION DURING TALKS. RAMIREZ STATED THAT TEXTILE TEAM'S PURPOSE WAS BASICALLY "TO LET US KNOW WHAT PROBLEMS THEY WERE FACING BACK HOME. AS FAR AS I CAN SEE, THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE VERY NORMAL. WE TOLD THEM THAT WE UNDERSTOOD THEIR PROBLEMS AND THAT WE THOUGHT THE BEST WAY TO HANDLE THE MATTER WAS TO MAINTAIN AN OPEN DIALOGUE. THERE WAS NO PRESSURE PUT ON US AT ALL." WHEN INFORMED OF DELLALE'S ALLEGATIONS, RAMIREZ SAID, "SHE'S BEEN IN THE BUSINESS MUCH LONGER THAN I. MAYBE SHE SENSES SOMETHING I DON'T."

4. LEADING LOCAL DAILY, "LA NACION", FRONT-PAGED THE STORY (HEADLINED "THE COUNTRY AND THE U.S. IN BRASSIERE WAR") ON MARCH 12, AND "LA REPUBLICA" CARRIED IT ON MARCH 11 ON PAGE 3 AS A MERE "BATTLE OF THE BRASSIERE;" BOTH STORIES SUMMARIZED THE "TICO TIMES" ARTICLE.
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